

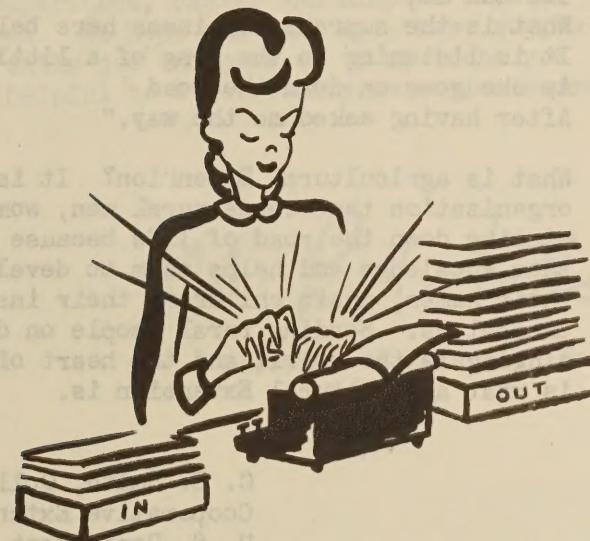
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TO:

*County Extension Secretaries*

SUBJECT:

# A HANDBOOK FOR YOU



FROM: U. S. Department of Agriculture  
Federal Extension Service  
Washington, D. C.  
DATE: July 1945

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## WHAT IS EXTENSION?

The story is told of the Chinese poet, Wang Wei, who lived 4,000 years ago and who, upon being asked, "What is the most worthwhile thing in life?" replied:

"I am old.  
Nothing interests me now.  
Moreover, I am not very intelligent,  
And my ideas  
Have never traveled farther than my feet.  
I know only my forest  
To which I always come back.  
You ask me,  
What is the supreme happiness here below?  
It is listening to the song of a little girl  
As she goes on down the road  
After having asked me the way."

What is agricultural Extension? It is an educational organization that sends rural men, women, and youth singing down the road of life because it carries to them knowledge and helps them to develop their farms, their homes, their children, their institutions, and themselves. Sending rural people on down the road singing is the spirit and the heart of Extension. It is what agricultural Extension is.

C. B. Smith, Collaborator  
Cooperative Extension Work  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

## Foreword

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Each of about 3,000 secretaries in county extension offices throughout the United States has an important job to do as her share in the extension program. It is up to each one of you to manage the county office effectively so that the Cooperative Extension Service can be of the greatest help to the 57,245,573 farmers and rural nonfarm people whom we serve.

This handbook has been prepared to help make your work easier. It is a combination of the varied experiences of county secretaries, such as yourself, who have learned from experience, easier and simpler ways of doing their work. We hope you will use these suggestions in your daily job and pass on to us ideas you feel would be helpful to other county extension secretaries.

*M. L. Wilson*

Director of Extension Work

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TO

COUNTY EXTENSION SECRETARIES

A HANDBOOK FOR YOU

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Extension Service is an educational service that helps rural people with their farm and home problems. It is a cooperative organization, sponsored and financed by Federal, State, county, and sometimes local funds.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which created the Extension Service, provides:

"That cooperative agricultural extension work shall consist of the giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications, and otherwise; and this work shall be carried on in such manner as may be mutually agreed upon by the Secretary of Agriculture and the State agricultural college or colleges receiving the benefits of this act." 1/

One of the best descriptions of what Cooperative Extension is has been given to us by Dr. C. B. Smith, formerly Assistant Director of Extension Work. It gives us a good feeling about all the help we can be to farmers as well as to city people, because agriculture touches every person in the United States and its Territories as well as people in foreign countries. You'll find the description on the inside cover of this handbook.

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1/ Section 2 of the Smith-Lever Act 1914.

## OFFICE HOSTESS

### The County Secretary Has an Important Job

The county extension agents have a big job to do as representatives of farm people, the college of agriculture, and the Federal Cooperative Extension Service. Because they have such a variety of jobs to do -- assisting farmers and farm families with programs which they, the agents, have helped to develop, planning and conducting demonstrations, and planning and taking part in community activities -- the time that the agents have available to spend in the office is very limited. That's why the secretary's 2/ job becomes doubly important. She is the office manager. The secretary is usually the "Girl Friday" to the county agricultural agent, the home demonstration agent, and the 4-H Club agent. It is her responsibility to assist the agents by skillful management of the office.

The county extension office is one place where the agricultural scientists, through their research, and the Government meet the farm people. The farmer's impression of the county office and its staff is his impression of the efficiency of the extension program and to some extent, of the Government. The skill with which the county extension secretary greets callers, manages the office, furnishes help and information when the agents are out, and the ability which she demonstrates in carrying out suggestions and requests of extension personnel mark her either as an efficient or inefficient office manager.

### Keeping Regular Office Hours

The county extension office keeps regular hours so that farmers or rural people who come into town for special help may be sure they will find the office open. Industrial companies whose job is rendering service, usually operate to suit the convenience of their customers. The county office is a place of business which serves the farmer, so we keep hours that will be convenient to him and not to ourselves. Both the farmer and his family are busy all day, and it may be that their only chance to discuss their problems with the agents is in the evening. For this reason, the county agent and home demonstration agent frequently have evening meetings which keep them working until 10 or 11 o'clock at night. This takes their time that would ordinarily be spent at home, so they may not be able to come into

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2/ Throughout this handbook, the title "secretary" is used, but women whose title is "county extension clerk" are included. Terminology varies throughout the country, but the duties are similar in many respects.

the office until later in the morning. Or they may make an early morning call in the county before they come into the office. The understanding and efficient secretary realizes this and voluntarily assumes the responsibility of opening the office at a definitely specified time and keeping regular office hours. The extension office is a business office, and visiting with friends on matters other than business is not fair to the Service.

#### Meeting the Public

A cheerful smile, a pleasing manner, appropriate dress, and an attitude of helpfulness go a long way toward winning the confidence of visitors and encouraging them to come again when they need help. A county extension secretary is the office hostess; she makes callers feel welcome. We want to help callers as we would like to be helped. A person calling at the office for the first time is usually rather shy or strange and hesitates to ask what he really wants. As the "office hostess," we will usually show our interest in the caller by looking up immediately from our work and greeting him with a "How do you do?" or "Is there something I can do for you?" This lets him know that we belong in the office and want to help him. Extension offices usually keep a record of the name and request of every office caller. For this, the daily office record sheet is kept. If we are unable to help the caller, this sheet can be used by the agents in following up and getting the information wanted, or as a record of the information we have given out.

#### Learn to Know Those Who Visit the Office

Many secretaries take pride in being able to greet callers by name. One secretary who did not know all the farm families in the community kept a county map on the counter and marked in callers' names in the proper farm area. After a time, she knew their names and where their farms were located. This built good will because the farmers knew that the county office folks were interested in them.

If you have difficulty remembering names, try to associate the name with some characteristic of the person. It is a help to the agents if you can announce the caller by name and, if possible, tell them what the caller wants. If the office is a busy one, it may be necessary for the caller to await his turn to see the agent. In that case, time will pass much faster and the caller will be more comfortable if he has a chair to sit on and if some new publications or agricultural magazines are handy for him to read while waiting.

#### Knowing the Agents' Schedules

Most agents make it a practice to be in the office at least 2 days a week. Some may spend time in the office each day. In

any case, it is good management to know where they are at any time during the regular office hours and when they will be in the office if someone needs to reach them. The weekly staff meeting will give us a start on completing their schedules, but these schedules should be kept up to date each day.

Callers may receive the wrong impression when they ask for the agent and we are unable to tell them where he is. To prevent such a situation, the extension agents should always keep you informed, that is, where they are, where they may be reached, and about when they will return to the office. If they fail to do this, you, as an office secretary, must not hesitate to ask for this information. Probably the caller needs to see one of the agents right away and a telephone call might bring him back past the caller's farm.

The secretary is sometimes asked by the agents to schedule appointments for the time when they will be in the office. These appointments should be written in on the agents' desk calendars as well as on our own so the agents will know beforehand whom they are to see. This is especially helpful when materials need to be collected before the appointment.

#### Giving out Information

When the agents are out and we can give the caller the help he needs, by all means, we should do it. This will save the agents' time for more difficult requests. By learning as much about extension work as possible, we will be able to satisfy many of the requests of office callers. One good rule in giving information is to be positive that it is correct and that the agents would want it given out. Then, give the information in the most helpful way possible. If we are not sure of the information requested by a caller, we'll get all the particulars on what he wants for the agent to take care of when he comes in.

Some office secretaries make a note of the following concerning people who call while the agent is out:

- (a) Name of caller
- (b) Purpose of call
- (c) Information given

This information is placed on the agent's desk for his use when he returns.

One efficient secretary in Georgia knew that a formula which appeared in a certain bulletin would be very popular. She made up quite a few copies of this formula and kept them handy in the bulletin folder. Most farmers felt this was a real service, as they needed only the formula and not the entire bulletin.

If the agents are out when we leave the office in the evening, leave on their desks the messages of people who want information or want to see them. Many times the agents will want to check on these messages before going home or in the evening before a meeting.

### Meetings

Most of the group educational work of extension agents is done through meetings, tours, and conferences. We will very often have to be able to answer questions about these meetings -- When is it? Where is it? How long will it last? What's it about? How do I get there? Who's going to speak? To have to know all **this** may seem hard at first, but rural people expect us to be able to answer all these questions.

When sending out letters or circulars concerning a meeting or event at which a specialist from the college is to participate, we should always send the specialist a copy of the letter.

### Keeping Calls Brief and Businesslike

Some people have a tendency to stay on in an office and visit after they have obtained the help they came for. We like to be friendly with them, but when they keep us from work that must be done, we must discourage visiting. One secretary in a Georgia county office, when asked the question that usually begins a conversation -- "How are you today?" -- answered in this way, "Well, I don't know today—I haven't had time to think about myself—I've been so busy!" The visitor then knew she had plenty of work to do and didn't have time to just visit.

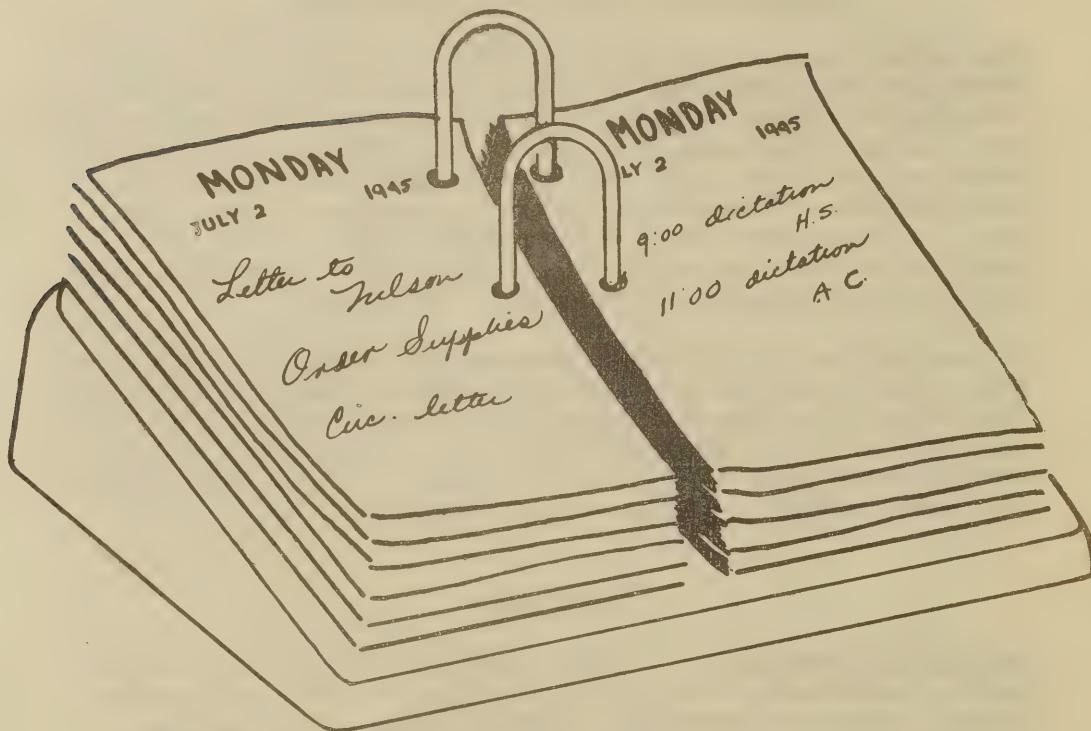
We can help the agents avoid unnecessary interruptions and over-long calls by tactfully handling persons who want to monopolize their time. An understanding with the agents about how we can help them with this problem will make us feel absolutely sure we are following their wishes in this matter. This understanding will keep us from assuming too much responsibility.

### MAKING PLANS

Weekly Staff Meeting. In well-organized county offices, the agents, assistants, and the secretary get together one morning a week to plan the work to be done that week. They outline their plans, such as meetings, trips, circular letters to go out, reports to be made, or anything that must be done. Then each one knows what to expect that week and can plan in advance when it should be done. Of course, in these times when everything can happen, plans should be flexible. It is a good idea for the secretary to type a list or report of these work plans for use during the week.

### Our Desk Calendar

One county secretary said her desk calendar was her best friend. She depended on it more than on any other one thing to help her get work out on time and to remind her of the 101 things that she as a secretary was supposed to do. This secretary had formed the habit (and it's a good one) of making notes on her desk calendar of things she must do for days, weeks, and even months ahead. It served as a "memory jogger" for her. Her boss always wondered how she could have such a good memory.



It's a good idea to take a few minutes at the beginning of each day to plan the work we want to accomplish and jot it down on our desk calendar. In this way we can allow time for each thing to be done, setting dead lines for ourselves. If we are assigned work by all the agents, we should plan our work so that we can do as much as possible for each of them — distributing our time fairly.

### Doing Work Ahead of Schedule

Probably the agents have said at the beginning of the month or at the beginning of the week that a circular letter is to go out to a certain mailing list. We know then what lists need to be addressed and can type a few envelopes at a time, whenever we have some spare minutes.

Since circular letters must have the penalty privilege letter-head at the top, we may be able to mimeograph the heading in advance. This will save time when we are ready to cut the stencil for the letter. Or, if we wish, we can order stencils with the cooperative letterhead already cut in. It's a wise plan to keep mailing lists up to date so they will not have to be checked when a circular letter is ready for mailing.

Several secretaries have found it helpful to keep a card list of names and addresses of people whom the agents visit or correspond with most frequently. This is especially valuable to a substitute in the absence of the regular secretary, or even to the agents, as initials and addresses should usually be checked.

We really ought to keep a record of all tentative dates of meetings -- county, State, regional, and national -- in which the agents may be interested or which they plan to attend. Then we can follow up or remind them of these meetings as they occur throughout the year. Secretaries can assist the agents by preventing events from "slipping up" because proper preparation was not begun in time.

Telegrams are usually "hurry-up" jobs, so we can save ourselves time and nerves if we assemble several sets of telegraph blanks with carbons between, all ready to put into the typewriter.

Forms that we use regularly can be prepared with carbons, and all kept together in the handiest place, which might be our desk.

### The Bulletin Board

One secretary got a great deal of satisfaction from the appreciation shown by agents and farm people for her attractively arranged and timely bulletin board. Each week or two she changed the information, bulletins, and pictures tacked on it so that gardening information and bulletins appeared a month before gardening season, landscape bulletins and pictures at transplanting season, and materials on control of insect pests when they were most troublesome. Many office calls were taken care of by this silent answer to questions because the leaflets and information were so wisely chosen and so frequently changed. This display also should be planned in advance with the agents so as to be sure that a supply of bulletins is on hand to back up those on the bulletin board.

## "OFFICEKEEPING"

A smooth-running office depends, to a great extent, on the arrangement of its furniture, equipment, supplies, and its general appearance to callers. A well-organized, attractive office is its own reward. Work is accomplished with greater speed and less nerve strain when equipment and supplies are arranged for convenience. Adequate filing and storage spaces are needed, but it is even more necessary that careful thought be given to placing supplies near the working surfaces or equipment where they are to be used. They can then be re-stored, with a minimum number of motions. Time spent in arranging the office and organizing its work will repay both the agents and us in satisfaction and results.

### Advantages of an Orderly Office

We have all pictured ourselves seated at a lovely mahogany desk in a beautiful, roomy office with venetian blinds, thick carpeting, and an atmosphere of formality. Very few offices are so extravagantly equipped, but some give us a similar impression. They look neat and well kept and make us feel at home and sure that the persons in that office are ready to help us and are efficient in every way.

Though we cannot have the office we dream of, we can create the illusion we want by trying a few of the tricks that some secretaries use.

Walls and windows.— Walls should be free of out-of-date posters, calendars, cartoons, handbills, and anything else that would make the room look cluttered. If possible, hang new posters neatly and take them down as soon as they are out of date. A window sill is a poor place to stack publications and materials, or to run soil tests. Dirty windows or cluttered window sills don't look efficient. Talk over with the agents the possibility of finding a convenient and systematic way of handling and filing all second-class mail which we sometimes find ourselves stacking either in windows or on top of files.

Furniture and equipment.— Many county extension secretaries who know the importance of a neat, well-kept office, dust the furniture and desks when they open the office in the morning. Besides making the office look more attractive, dusting protects the finish of furniture. Broken furniture, desks, or chairs should be kept in the storeroom or out of sight until they can be repaired or disposed of.

Storage.— Extra copies of bulletins, surplus supplies, and materials should be kept out of sight in cupboards or cabinets. The top of filing cases is a poor place to stack material, and a fire hazard if it happens to be old papers.

Ink and glue or any other liquid should always be stored on the bottom shelf of the cabinet. One secretary learned the hard way when a bottle of ink on the top shelf tipped over and broke. We don't have to guess what happened!

Store paper in its original packages until used, to keep it from getting dirty or dog-eared. Old forms or supplies that are no longer used or needed should be turned back to the State office, as they may be needed in other counties. Labeling the packages as to content and quantity will help us find what we want more easily and will make it easier to take an inventory.

Penalty and other envelopes can easily become brittle and unfit for use from age or storage in a poor place. A good practice is to place new envelopes behind old ones on the shelf so that the older ones will be used first. In this way no envelope will become too old for use.

Keep related things together -- envelopes, carbon paper, and telegraph blanks near the supply of various kinds of paper; pens, erasers, clips, rubber bands; notebooks and scratch pads; filing supplies, etc. This will save time when something is needed in a hurry. Make the best use of storage space available. Keep in it only materials, furniture, or supplies that will be used. It will be easier to check on supplies that are running low if they are kept in neat order.

#### Opening the Office

Most secretaries are in the office a few minutes early in the morning to open the windows and air out the rooms, turn on the lights, and to dust the desks and straighten the agents' desks before they get in. The agents probably worked late the night before and may have appointments the first thing in the morning. Remove work that has been completed, and arrange the rest in order on their desks so that the most important things will be taken care of first. Our office should be as clean and neat as our own home; sometimes this is just a matter of letting the janitor know what our standards are.

#### Office Arrangement

We arrange our offices in such a way as to take the best advantage of the space available, to get the best light for our work, to have a convenient place to receive office callers, and to make our offices look attractive and efficient.

Before deciding to rearrange the office, it would be well to make a diagram of the office as it is now laid out to show where we do certain kinds of work. Then ask ourselves the following questions to see if our workplaces are properly laid out:

(1) Would the work flow more easily and quickly if the office equipment and desks were rearranged? (2) Are the desks and other equipment arranged to avoid unnecessary steps? (3) Is it often necessary to leave the workplace to go after information, equipment, or materials? If so, could such material be made more accessible? (4) Could files and other receptacles be labeled or indexed better to make the work easier and to prevent errors? (5) Is available space being used to best advantage?

Before doing any rearranging, also consider the following principles of good office arrangement or layout:

- (1) Employees should not face the light. It is better to have one's back to the light or have light over the left or right shoulder.
- (2) Desks should all be as close to natural light as possible. For very close work or when cutting stencils where daylight is not bright enough, use a desk lamp with a daylight bulb if possible. Poor light strains the eyes and makes a person tired sooner.
- (3) Desks should usually face in the same direction.
- (4) Agents should be located where persons calling on them can talk without being overheard or disturbing others in the office. There should be a free aisle from the waiting chairs to the agents' desks, so visitors won't have to walk around through the office.
- (5) Files or other equipment, if possible, should be placed nearest the person using or working with them.
- (6) The bulletin stand should be located where visitors can easily see what pamphlets or materials are available and have an opportunity to read some of them while waiting to see any of the agents.
- (7) Since the secretary usually receives the callers first, her desk usually should be nearest the entrance.
- (8) There should be a storeroom where the mimeograph machine is kept, with cupboards for supplies and extra copies of pamphlets, and room for any surplus equipment.

For more information on office layout see the reference list on page 48 of this pamphlet.

#### Check Your Lighting

Amount of light. - Both general and localized light should be sufficient to do all tasks without eyestrain. No work space should have less than 10 units of light; for reading and writing, 15 to 20 units are needed. Electric light companies will usually furnish someone to test the light.

Eliminate glare.— Exposed light bulbs are one of the worst sources of glare. Desks and tables with glass tops or highly polished surfaces, and glassy paper all reflect glare. Do not sit facing a window. Place lamps so that the light is not reflected into your face. A neutral-colored blotter placed on your desk will help.

Light should be evenly distributed throughout the room as well as focused on the task itself. The muscles of the eyes are overtired by constant adjustment from the well-lighted task to the darker room and back on the task.

## MAIL

The extension secretary is responsible for all mail, incoming and outgoing. We open all letters except those marked "personal" and see that they are placed on the desk of the person to whom they are addressed.

### Sorting Mail

It is our responsibility, too, to arrange letters for easy reading by unfolding them and attaching all enclosures. We attach, also, any previous correspondence that would be helpful to the agents when they prepare the reply. First-class mail can easily be overlooked if we do not separate it from other mail. We might put first-class mail in one basket on the agents' desks with the most important letters on top and letters on like subjects grouped together. Other mail, such as bulletins, pamphlets, and reference material could be placed in another basket on the agents' desks for review when they have a chance.

### Following Up

Our responsibility for mail does not end when we have placed an incoming letter in the agent's basket. It is up to us to see that that letter receives attention and a reply goes out as soon as possible to the person who wrote the letter. Mail from the State office is often in mimeograph form since it goes to so many agents, but it still should be placed with first-class mail to receive the agents' immediate attention.

### Answering Routine Mail

Secretaries who become thoroughly familiar with the routine work of the office can easily prepare for the agents' signature answers to routine letters themselves, such as requests for circular letters, bulletins, and dates of meetings. Some offices have mimeographed

form transmittal letters so that a special letter doesn't have to be typed each time. Maybe we can talk over with the agents what letters would be routine so that we can prepare such letters ourselves to relieve them of unnecessary detail.

We may even know enough about the county work to prepare rough drafts of more important letters for the agents to revise. Besides giving us good experience, this may enable us to save the agents' time for taking care of more difficult letters.

#### Acknowledging Letters

If the agents are away from the office for several days, we can acknowledge letters that come in and tell the writer that the agent will reply to the letter when he returns. This will let the writer know that his letter has reached its destination and will get the agent's personal attention. Such letters should always be sent under stamp or signed by one of the other agents.

#### Taking Dictation

A lot of time and waste motion can be saved if a time each day is set for dictation and if the necessary tools are ready. Because of the varied activities of the office, a time cannot always be set, but it is desirable. The following suggestions may be helpful:

##### Before dictation:

- (1) Have notebook, with plenty of clean pages, ready.
- (2) Hold used pages together with a rubber band.
- (3) Take several sharpened pencils, including a red pencil, or a well-filled fountain pen, with you when called for dictation.

##### Taking dictation:

- (1) Date your dictation before you begin.
- (2) Sit facing the agent or at the desk slide (check his preference.)

Allow yourself enough room to rest your arm on a level surface. (A knee is a poor resting place for a shorthand notebook.)

- (3) To acquire speed, phrase as much as possible.
- (4) Avoid distracting the agent's attention when he pauses to think.
- (5) Be ready to read back the last sentence or paragraph.
- (6) Circle with a pencil the outlines you are not sure of. Then you can ask about them before leaving the agent's desk.

### Transcribing dictation:

- (1) Collect enclosures or attachments to letters before beginning to transcribe.
- (2) Stand or prop your notebook so it will be easier to see.
- (3) Gauge the length of the letter by the number of pages dictated.

(Use the average one-page letter, single-spaced or double-spaced, to measure the number of dictated pages needed to fill it. The size and spacing of your shorthand outlined and the width of the letter margin determine this for you. Once this is determined, you will always be able to measure the length of your letters.)

- (4) Read the dictation through once and mark your own punctuation if not already marked, to make the meaning clear before typing. Particularly note the instructions you wrote in red.
- (5) Place the letter in the center of the writing space, with the margins on all sides about equal, and be sure the different parts of the letter are well balanced. The business letter should at first glance make a favorable impression on the reader.
- (6) Type the letter in rough draft only if it seems to be particularly difficult or if you feel very uncertain about it. Then the agent can make any changes necessary before it is finally typed.
- (7) Check over each typed letter for typographical errors, incorrect names, misspelling, or other errors, before removing it from the typewriter. Of course, we are careful in typing to make neat erasures and to avoid smudges, since the completed letter is a picture of us as efficient secretaries.
- (8) Assemble the letter, enclosures, and envelope so it will be easy for the agent to review and sign.
- (9) Draw a line through the dictation when you have finished.

### Correcting Letters

Many times we feel that we would like to change a letter that has been dictated to make it clearer or to correct the grammar. Most agents take it for granted that their secretaries will do this, and they are glad to have them do it. It is difficult for anyone dictating a letter to get it absolutely perfect when he is concentrating on the ideas rather than on the form. Making changes is much easier when one can see the words on paper.

Since we share responsibility with the agents for getting out good letters, correct in detail and appearance - letters that represent the county extension office - we will want to talk over with the agents just how far we should go in carrying out this responsibility.

#### Composing Letters

The agents will appreciate any help we can give them in answering letters. They may tell us in a few words what they'd like to say and then tell us to "put it in your own words." if so, we will "write as we'd like to be written to." If we put ourselves in the place of the person receiving our letter, we'll write courteously, make sure the information is clear, and avoid irritating words and phrases. Avoid big words that would not be familiar to the person receiving our letter. Simple, familiar words and short sentences will make our letters easier to read and understand. Above all, we must be enthusiastic -- show our interest in the person to whom we are writing. Our enthusiasm will keep us from negative words and thoughts. In return, the person receiving our letter will be enthusiastic.

A letter is a substitute for a personal interview, so we write as we would talk face to face with someone calling in the office for information. To be sure we answer all questions and give the information that is needed, it is helpful to keep in mind the purpose of the letter and to make a brief outline of what we are going to say. The first point in our outline should be the most important thing we want to say, and the other points should fall in logical order. The outline will keep us from rambling or dragging our letters out.

We should make easy, for the farmer, the action that we want him to take. If we present more than one course of action, he will become confused and may not take any action.

If the letter is not complete, usually a second letter will be required. It is said that one out of every 10 second letters would not have to be written had the first one been complete.

Before asking the agents to sign letters we have written, it is wise to read the letters over as though we were receiving them. If they aren't clear or if we're not entirely satisfied, we'll write them over. We want to fulfill our duties as public servants and make friends for the Extension Service.

### Getting Letters into the Mail

We want our letters to go out promptly, and our farmers want to get them promptly. We'll want to learn the mail schedule so we can get letters read and signed in time to get them out promptly. There may be certain classes of letters that the agents will want us to sign and mail. We'll want to make sure which those are.

If the agents are not in the office, we'll leave letters to be signed on their desks, ready to be placed in envelopes so they may mail them if they come into the office later in the evening. But we must be sure the letters are as we want them to go out, with every detail correct and enclosures attached.

### The Penalty Privilege

Cooperative extension employees have the right to use the Federal penalty privilege for sending official mail without postage stamps because they are employees of the Department of Agriculture.

Our State extension service can answer our questions about the use of this privilege. Specific rulings and regulations have been set up for us by the Post Office Department. These rulings and regulations are contained in a printed circular issued by the Post Office Department, entitled "Information Concerning the Use of the Penalty Privilege by Cooperative Extension Employees of the United States Department of Agriculture." Copies of this circular have been furnished all cooperative extension employees. From time to time we obtain from the Post Office Department interpretations of these rules as they apply to specific cases presented, and these interpretations are forwarded to all States. Extension secretaries should familiarize themselves with all this material.

### Mailing Lists

We are urged to keep mailing lists up to date. Local postmasters will assist us in every way possible in doing this. We should give special attention to correctness in addressing mail. For example, recently a large number of letters were returned to the Federal Extension Service as unclaimed because the envelopes had been addressed with the given name last and the surname first, such as "Jones Mary" and "Hise John." Addresses should be complete, too. Many letters are returned because they lack the street address in larger cities or rural route numbers if there are several routes from one post office. It is our responsibility to see that mail goes out correctly addressed in every way.

## OUR TELEPHONE TECHNIQUE

### Mechanical Use of Telephone

Because the telephone has such a narrow tone range, it takes all the natural tone quality out of the human voice and makes it sound dull and colorless. This makes it necessary for us to speak more distinctly and to exaggerate the inflection of the voice to make it sound interesting and pleasant.

We should notice where we hold the mouthpiece when speaking into the 'phone. It should be directly in front of the mouth, nearly touching the nose so that the voice carries into the transmitter rather than over it. We speak in a natural tone of voice, not too loudly or too softly.

Most people are amazed when told that the earpiece, as well as the mouthpiece, carries sound. Most of us try to shut off sound by covering both the mouthpiece and the earpiece with our hands. The telephone is so sensitive that it can pick up these sounds regardless.

The telephone picks up sound doubly well if it is held against a person's chest or body. The chest acts as a sounding board, and these vibrations carry as though we were speaking directly into the 'phone.

### Telephone Habits

Each of us, whether we are an agent, a secretary, or a clerk, is a representative of the Cooperative Extension Service. The impression made by each of us in one telephone call may become the caller's total impression of the Service as a whole. The tactful secretary will let persons know that the agent is in a conference, in a meeting, is out in the county, or the like, rather than to say that the agent is busy. Offer to take a message (which you will write down), or to have the agent call.

Early-morning or lunchtime calls may be answered: "Mr. \_\_\_\_ has been delayed"; "We are expecting Miss \_\_\_\_ in 10 or 15 minutes"; "Mrs. \_\_\_\_ won't be in for half an hour." Offer to take a message or to have the agent call.

It is important that the agents get these messages accurately. We can do much to build a feeling of courtesy and efficiency in the Extension Service office through careful handling of these seemingly small details. Let's check ourselves on the following questions to see how near we come to having good telephone technique.

Promptness:

Do I regularly--

Answer before the second ring?

Give messages to the agents promptly so that calls received in their absence will be returned?

Keep pencil and paper handy by the 'phone for notes?

Identification:

Do I regularly--

Answer by identifying the office, not by "Hello"?

Courtesy:

Do I regularly--

Help the caller to get the information he wants without a second call?

Avoid such abrupt phrases as "Who's calling?"

Use such polite phrases as "Please," "Thank you," "I'm sorry," or "May I tell him who's calling?"

Definitely close calls with "Good-by," or a similar phrase?

Leave the caller with the impression that the extension staff is courteous, friendly, and businesslike?

Voice Impression:

Do I regularly--

Sound interested, awake, helpful, friendly, pleasant?

Speak distinctly so as to be clearly understood?

Sound like a member of a human and businesslike office?

If we can answer "yes" to every question, our technique in using the telephone is an advantage to the organization in which we work. If we have to answer "no" in any case, let's see what we can do to be able to say "Yes."

Long-Distance Telephone Calls

Station-to-station calls. Call operator and give information in this order:

(1) Name of the place (city and State).

(2) Telephone number. Give the name and address if the number is not known, and say that you will talk with anyone who answers the 'phone.

(3) Give your office telephone number when it is requested by the operator. Charges on station-to-station calls begin when the called telephone answers.

Person-to-person calls.— Those on which we ask the operator to call a particular person to the telephone, or ask to reach a particular department or extension telephone that is served by a private switchboard. Charges begin when the person called, or the extension number called, is reached.

Use this order to place the call:

- (1) Name of the place (city and State). (C. 202)
- (2) Name of the person wanted and his telephone number, or his address if you do not know the number.
- (3) Give your office telephone number when it is requested by the operator.

Collect calls.— When we want the person called to pay for the call, tell the operator before she begins placing the call. We may say, "I want to place a collect call for....." or "Collect call for.....".

"Quote Charges".— When we need to know the cost of a call, it saves time to ask the operator to give us the charges when we place the call. After giving the number of the telephone used for the call, use the phrase "Quote charges."

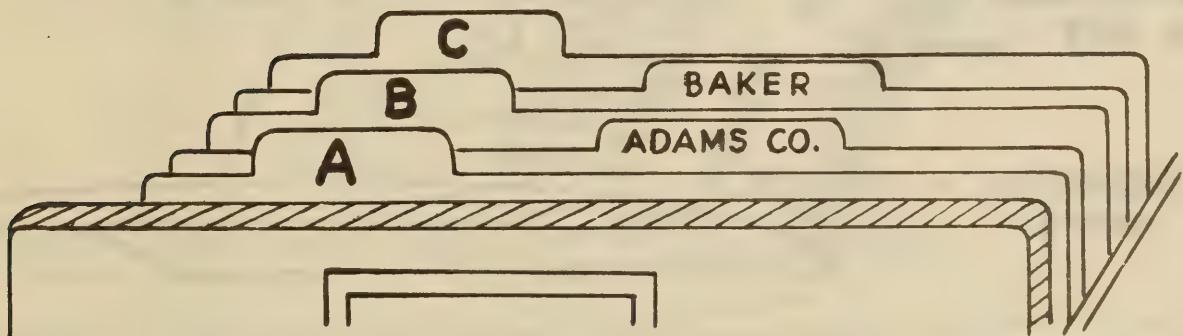
#### FILING

Filing is the systematic arrangement of a collection of letters, papers, or documents to provide for their orderly maintenance and to insure ready reference to the material. In many cases, a uniform filing system has been worked out for the State. Some of these are alphabetical systems, some numerical, and others by subject matter alphabetically arranged. If a uniform system of filing has been designed for our use, we should study it thoroughly and follow it exactly. However, if it is necessary to design a new filing system or revise the one we have, the material should be thoroughly reviewed and discussed with the district agent from the State office before a new method is adopted.

Filing material is usually made up of (1) incoming and outgoing mail and telegrams covering various phases of the activities of our organization; (2) information concerning certain subjects or projects connected with our work, such as articles, reference copies of circular letters, research reports, photographs, news clippings, price lists, or memoranda; (3) circulars, bulletins, and other material such as leaflets, blueprints, and charts. We may find we will have to set up three kinds of files — an alphabetical correspondence file, a project file, and a bulletin file.

#### Correspondence Files

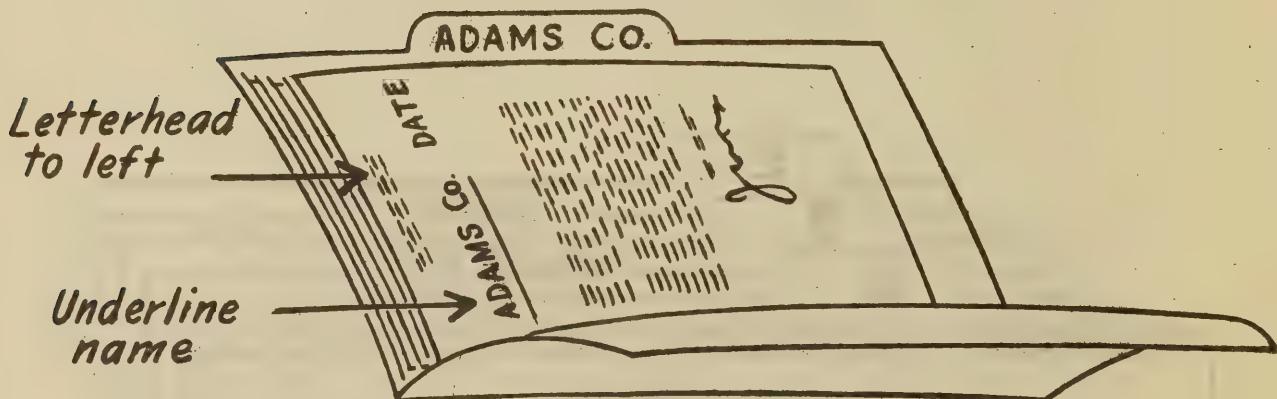
An alphabetical correspondence file is usually recommended for letters and telegrams, because it is the easiest to use. When we know most of the people with whom we correspond, we can easily find the letter we want by looking for it by the person's name or firm name. We set up a folder for each letter of the alphabet. If we have more than about eight letters from one person or one firm, it is a good idea to set up a separate folder for those letters, labeling it by the person's name. For example:



Correspondence with the State office or correspondence relating to the operation of our office can be separated in a section marked either "Administration" or "State Extension Office." Folders under this section might be labeled "Director," "State Leader," "District Agent," and "Specialists."

The carbon copy of the letter we write should be stapled on top of the letter replied to (if any) or written on the back of the letter. The letter of the alphabet or the name under which the letter is to be filed should be underlined on the letter -- Adams Manufacturing Co. or Dale Co. This will insure refiling in the proper place whenever the letter is removed from the file for reference purposes.

Letters should be placed in the folder in front of old material and with the letterhead to the left side. In this way, our newest letters will always be on the top of the pack when we pull out a folder; easy to find; and the date will be easily seen.



If we have a letter that contains information we might need on a certain project, a cross-reference sheet should be filled out and filed under project so we'll know where to locate the letter. A cross-reference sheet shows the name of the person writing the letter, address, date of letter, and a brief summary of what it is about. Following is an example of one kind of cross-reference sheet.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**CROSS REFERENCE SHEET**

DATE: January 28, 1945 ← DATE OF LETTER

CROSS INDEX: Animal Husbandry ← PROJECT FILE SUBJECT

NAME OF PERSON TO WHOM  
LETTER IS WRITTEN

TO: M. J. Adams

NAME OF PERSON  
WRITING LETTER

FROM: R. J. Smith, Animal Husbandry Specialist

SUMMARY: Requests Samples of Hog Cholera Serum ← SHORT PARAGRAPH  
TO IDENTIFY LETTER

PLACE WHERE ORIGINAL  
LETTER IS FILED

FILED: Adams Company  
INDEXER: H.C.S. ← INITIALS OF PERSON  
PREPARING CROSS REFERENCE

REMARKS: Same letter sent to Jones Chemical Company ←

SHORT PARAGRAPH FOR  
NOTING PERTINENT  
INFORMATION

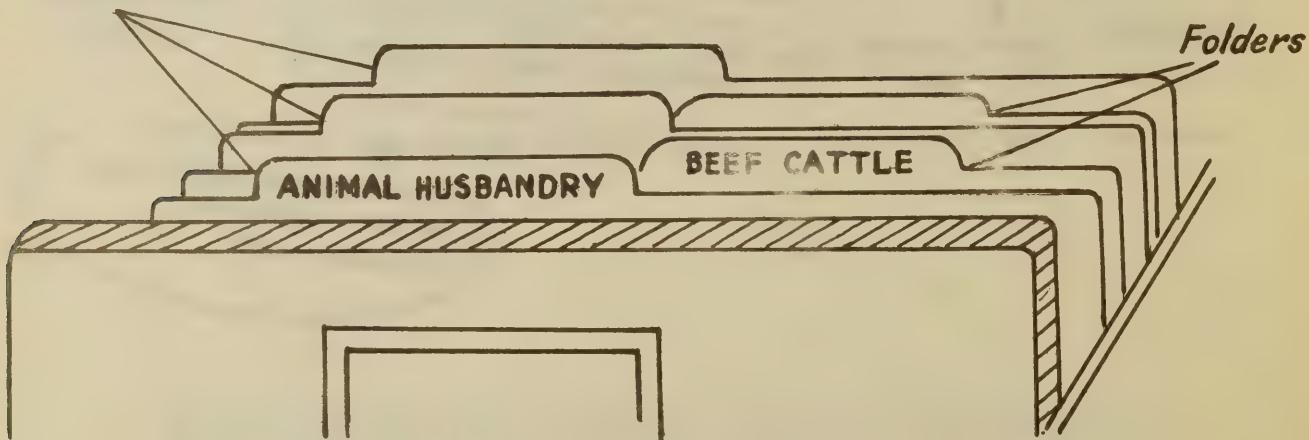
Reader's file. We may find it helpful, in addition to the original and file copy, to make a colored copy of every letter to keep in a desk folder. These would not be filed alphabetically, but filed by date in this folder. Place the copy on top so that the most recent date is at the top of the pack. The letters can be counted each month for the statistical report and are handy for the agents to use in reviewing work accomplished, people reached, and for writing reports. It's also a good idea to keep in this folder a copy of everything that is mimeographed. Mark on it the number mimeographed and the mailing list (if a circular letter) to which it was sent.

#### Project File

Our project file will contain information concerning subjects or projects connected with our work - articles, circular letters, lists, research reports, memoranda, newspaper clippings, etc. We will probably study the material carefully to see what projects are involved and then use the project titles as headings for the various folders. These folders will be arranged in alphabetical order.

County extension office file. In some offices it may be more desirable to file together the material for the county agent and the home agent. In States where this plan is followed there is only one filing system. This is the County Extension Office File. One section of it deals with agriculture, another with home economics. This joint file is more helpful where the home agent is working with some agricultural problems and the agricultural agent is assisting with some home economics problems. We can use guide cards for the main subject headings and file the folders alphabetically behind the guide cards in this fashion:

#### Guide Cards



The subject or project heading under which material is to be filed should be placed on the material, at the time of filing, by writing the appropriate subject heading in the upper, left corner of the material. Within the folder, the material should be arranged chronologically by date, with the newest material at the top of the folder.

If we file clippings or articles, they should be either stapled or pasted to a letter-size sheet of paper so they can't be mislaid if very small.

Photographs usually require careful handling so we may want to set up a special file drawer for them. We can keep them in envelopes and file them by the projects they illustrate. Or we can paste one copy of each print in a scrapbook, numbering each in the order in which it is added; then, we can file the extra copies and negatives in envelopes to correspond with the number in the scrapbook.

#### Bulletin File

Bulletins and circulars may be filed by subject matter in subject folders. If so, they should be kept in a file drawer separate from other material. Some offices find it most practical to file bulletins in a bulletin-size cardboard box with cloth covering, using stickers on the box for identification. These boxes are usually placed on shelves, but preferably in a closed cupboard. Some offices save time by using the number on the bulletin for filing. In making up the master file, the bulletins and circulars are divided into three divisions:- 1. State extension bulletins and circulars; 2. Other State publications; 3. United States publications - and filed in the order of the numbers on each.

The usual procedure is to use a classification key which is a combination of alphabetic and index systems. The key may be pasted on a cardboard and kept in the front of the file drawer for ready reference when you file or withdraw a reference bulletin. The index number should be placed on each new bulletin when first filed so that it can be easily returned to its proper place after being used.

Many offices find it helpful to have a file for blank forms such as expense vouchers, monthly report forms, penalty-mail report forms, 4-H Club enrollment blanks, and the many other forms that are used in the various phases of the work.

#### Clearing the Files

We'll find it a good practice to keep our files from getting overcrowded by going through them thoroughly at least once a year. Until we are very familiar with extension work, we'll check with the agents before throwing away material from any of the files.

Some agents key letters and publications for filing as they read them. For example, "R" for reference; "Pm" for permanent. A system of this kind helps greatly when the secretary clears the files, and cuts down the time spent checking with the agents.

Correspondence files.— We generally save all correspondence. But once a year we can transfer old material (probably 2 or 3 years old), that we no longer need to refer to, to the permanent file or pack it into cartons to be placed in storage. This will help us to keep our files empty enough to be able to add new material.

Project files.— Some project folders we carry forward from year to year. Other projects that may be discontinued should be filed in the permanent file. We always save annual reports, monthly reports, lists, legal papers, etc. In some States expense accounts need not be kept in the permanent file longer than 3 to 5 years unless the agents request that this be done, as these are on record at the State accounting office. Special campaign material that adds to the historical value of Extension in the county should be placed in the permanent file.

4-H Club stories should be kept at least a year. Stories of those who may later enroll in leadership work or qualify for special awards should be kept indefinitely, or until we are sure they will not be needed.

Bulletin files.— Our bulletin file should be kept up to date and should be checked frequently. Some bulletins may become old in date but still contain useful information we may need. By pulling out those we think are out of date and checking with the agents before discarding them, we will be sure we are throwing out only material that is no longer useful. Of course, our master file of bulletins which the agents use for reference, should contain one copy of every publication issued by our State.

#### RECORDS AND REPORTS

In some county extension offices, secretaries are depended on to compile first drafts of monthly and annual statistical reports. In all offices, they keep some records on which such reports are based. We secretaries can save time for ourselves and the agents by learning to keep accurate records of items to be included in these reports. It's also a good idea to keep a file or folder where anyone can find directions for preparing the reports.

Our attitude toward records and reports will be influenced by what we know of the purpose they are intended to serve. Sometimes extension workers have the attitude that if worth-while work has been done, that work should speak for itself. But no piece of extension work is really completed until the accomplishment has been checked and adequately recorded in the reports on file in the extension office.

Before we begin to outline our report, we want to determine what its purpose is, for whom it is intended, and how it is to be used. Our monthly and annual narrative reports, and in fact, statistical reports too, we know are written to furnish the people of the county and the State director of extension with information about the progress and plans for the extension program. These reports are used by the director in coordinating the various county programs and will give him and the State staff the information they need to give more assistance to each county agent.

The director uses the county annual report as a basis for the annual report, which he furnishes to the Federal Extension Service in Washington, D.C., and to the governor and State legislature. A copy, too, of the county annual report goes to the Federal Extension Service. The chief value of reports is that they are an inventory of the past year's efforts and accomplishments and so enable workers to plan more effectively for the coming year.

#### Records on Which Reports are Based

Facts are the building materials of our reports. The monthly and annual statistical reports and, to a certain extent, the narrative reports, depend on about nine types of records for the facts reported. Here these nine records are described for us by the Federal Extension Service:

(1) Records of farm and home visits, meetings, and travel expenses. One of the most difficult and important record problems faced by Extension workers is that of making adequate notes of service rendered and progress made in connection with farm and home visits, conferences with local leaders, meetings, and similar field activities. The most popular way of collecting such information is in the field diary. The field diary provides space for recording day-to-day official expenses incurred; the names of farmers, farm home-makers, boys, and girls called upon, together with the information given; meetings held and attendance; requests for information; and miscellaneous notes. The diaries are kept by the agents, but the figures from them are summarized by the secretary and are entered into the monthly statistical report.

(2) Office calls, telephone calls, bulletins, and letters.— The growing importance of the county office of the Cooperative Extension Service as the county center for all activities relating to agriculture and rural homes makes necessary some simple, yet adequate, plan for recording office activities. A daily office record sheet is used by the office staff in tallying telephone calls, bulletins distributed, letters written, and office calls. Where county agricultural and home demonstration agents or club agents are employed, it may be necessary to keep a separate daily office record for each. In some States, however, one daily office record is kept by the secretary for all agents in the county.

(3) Follow-up file.- To provide adequately for the orderly handling of requests for service and other desirable follow-up action growing out of contacts made in connection with field and office activities, a follow-up or tickler file is a helpful device in every extension office. Such a file may be a 3-by-5 or a 4-by-6-inch card file with guides arranged by months, and subguides for the days of the current month. Or we may find our desk calendar pads the handiest to use.

The individual record and follow-up slips for matters requiring further action, which have been filled out in connection with farm or home visits and contacts at meetings by the extension agent, or in connection with telephone calls, office calls, or letters by the office secretary, are filed in accordance with the follow-up date noted on the slip.

Each morning the office secretary takes out the follow-up slips accumulated for that day, attends to such matters as she can, and brings others to the attention of the extension agent concerned. If still further follow-up is desirable, a new follow-up date is entered, and the slip refiled in the follow-up file box. When all necessary follow-up action has been completed, the follow-up slip goes to the project file if the information on it is of value in that connection; or if the slip is of no further use, it is destroyed.

In addition to insuring that unfinished business will again come up for attention at the proper date, the follow-up file relieves the busy agent of responsibility for keeping unfulfilled promises constantly in mind.

(4) 4-H Club membership application.- The application card or form for 4-H Club membership provides essential information as to age, school attendance, farm background, previous club experience, and signature of approval of the prospective member's parent or guardian. From these application cards the secretary or a local leader compiled the 4-H enrollment summary described below.

(5) Enrollment summary.- The enrollment summary has a place for the name of the club, date organized, names of leader and assistant leader, number of members and number of homes represented, the names of the club officers followed by names of the other members, and the personal data for each taken from the application form. The local leader or secretary summarizes the membership according to years in club work and age, listing boys and girls separately. At the end of the year, a copy of the club enrollment summary may be returned by the secretary to the local leader to enter information regarding project activities completed, or if not completed, probable reasons, and other essential information regarding activities conducted by the club during the year.

(6) Permanent record of 4-H Club member and of leader.-- In view of the importance of 4-H Club work in the extension program, it is desirable that the county extension office have an alphabetical file record of every individual club member and leader which will furnish succeeding extension workers with the essential information regarding each individual's participation in club work. The permanent record card for a 4-H Club member calls for the name, address, location, date of birth, and name of parent or guardian, together with summary information regarding the project work carried on each year by a club member. The back of the card provides for listing by years the outstanding achievements, offices held, and special awards.

Such a permanent record file makes it possible to check quickly the eligibility of individuals for consideration in connection with various State, Regional, and National 4-H Club competitions. It is by far the most essential record required in 4-H Club work. In addition, for each 4-H Club member who enters a State contest, a manila folder may be kept for filing his record book, contests entered, stories, and news articles he has written. The record for a 4-H leader provides for information such as name, address, occupation, years in community, ages of children, years of service as leader.

(7) Membership records of cooperating individuals or organizations. It is frequently desirable for the county extension office to maintain a record file of the membership in the county extension association or the organization of rural people recognized by State law as the official county body cooperating in the conduct of extension work. The office secretary keeps a record of the membership in a dairy-herd improvement association or similar service group set up to promote some phase of the extension program and enrollment in special-interest home-economics groups or clubs.

(8) Changes in farm and home practices.-- In addition to the aforementioned records, some States require agents to keep a record of the changes made in farm and home practices that result from extension activities. Where such records are used, the secretary is responsible for summarizing them for the annual report.

(9) Financial records.-- Special forms for keeping financial records and for making financial reports are used in the various States and counties. Material pertaining to financial records, such as budgets, expense accounts, bills to be paid and receipts for bills paid, are the responsibility of some extension secretaries. Great care must be taken that such records are accurate and adequate.

#### Getting Ready for the Annual Narrative Report

We can save both the agents' time and our own by following the practice of a county secretary in Ohio. She made an extra copy

of each monthly narrative report she typed. She cut this report apart and pasted each project on a sheet of paper to show the progress month by month for each project. The sheet looked like this:

## MARKETING

January

February

At the end of the year when the agents were ready to dictate the annual report, they had each project on a separate page and could use parts from each monthly report to sum up the project. This saved a lot of time, since formerly they had to thumb through each month's report to get the progress on a particular project. This method saved the secretary time because the agents had everything before them and could go right on with the dictation and not lose time searching through the monthly reports.

Although secretaries may never be called on to write the monthly or annual report for the county, our understanding of the fundamental principles of good reporting will insure a more satisfactory report.

The same principles apply to the writing of narrative reports of all extension workers. A good narrative annual report enables the reader to obtain a comprehensive picture of—

- (1) What was attempted - the program as outlined at the beginning of the year.
- (2) How the work was carried on - the teaching methods employed.
- (3) The cooperation obtained from other extension workers, rural people, commercial interests, and other public agencies.

- (4) Definite accomplishments, supported by objective evidence.
- (5) Significance of the year's progress and accomplishments in terms of better agriculture, better homemaking, improved boys and girls, better rural living, etc.
- (6) How next year's work can be strengthened and improved in light of the current year's experience.

#### Organizing the Material

Facts are the building materials of our report. They should be accurate and complete and organized into such a logical sequence that they produce the desired response expected of the report. The skill with which the outline is prepared as to main or sub-headings often determines whether we have an attractive, useful structure or a mass of disorganized rubble.

#### Writing the Report

To be easily understood and to be interesting, reports should be written in language appropriate to the subject and reader. Avoid the use of technical words that might not be entirely familiar. Use short sentences and paragraphs to show the sequence of ideas.

#### Displaying Main Parts of the Report

Headings are a way of calling attention to parts of a report. They show the break or sequence of ideas. However, use them sparingly so they won't make the report seem choppy or disjointed. Make good use of tables, charts, pictures, or other visual aids to present facts in an easily understood or digested form.

### ROUTINE JOBS THE EASY WAY

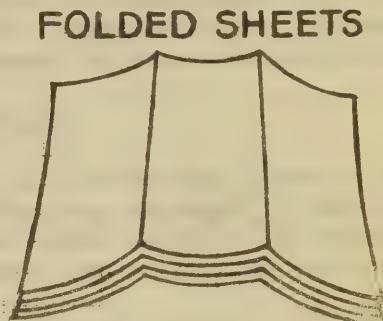
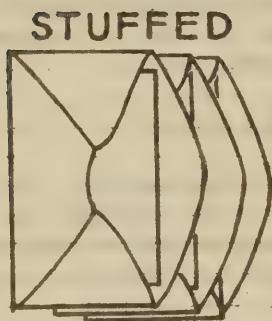
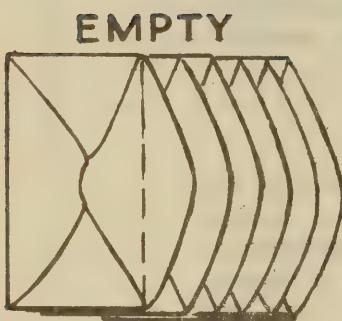
#### Folding, Stuffing, and Sealing

If you have a great many circular letters or announcements to get out in a short time, you have probably discovered the simplest way to fold, stuff, and seal them. If you do not have a plan that is satisfying to you, try these:

#### Enclosing a single sheet:

- (1) Pick up about 15 copies of the sheet.
- (2) Crease all sheets at one time and turn face down at your right hand.
- (3) Prepare a stack of envelopes by opening their flaps and place them face down at your left hand.

- (4) a. Pick up a sheet with right hand at the far right fold.
- b. Pick up envelope with left hand.
- (5) Insert sheet in envelope bending left fold under as you insert it.
- (6) Place stuffed envelope face down with flap open and repeat steps 1 to 6 until all circulars are stuffed:

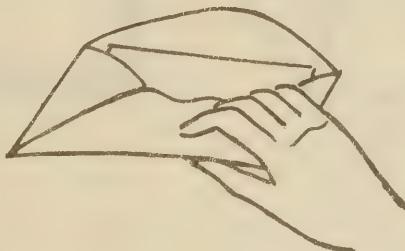
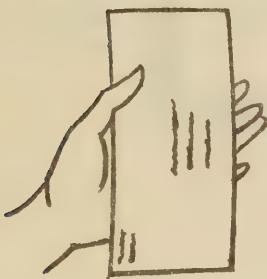


- (7) Then fan envelopes with flaps together order to dampen and seal easily:



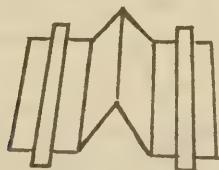
(8) Run a wet sponge across all the flaps with one upward motion, and with the left hand hold the envelopes from slipping.

(9) Pick up each envelope from bottom with right hand and place it in left hand with the sealed edge turned downward in your hand, pinching to seal tightly:

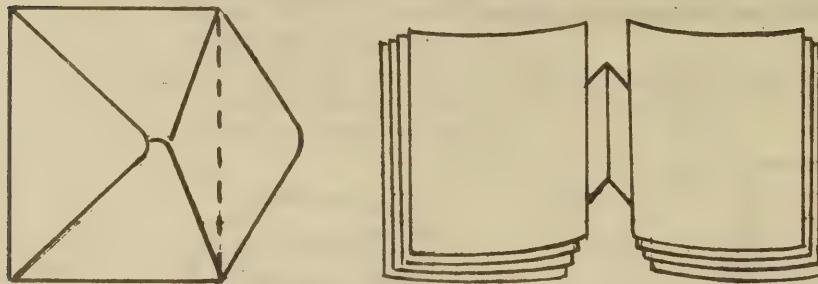


Enclosing several sheets.— Assembling the sheets that go into a two-or-four-page circular usually takes extra time unless we follow a method as simple as this one:

(1) Take a small piece of cardboard, about 7 by 3 inches and fold it into four equal parts. Use scotch tape to fasten it to your desk or table in the following manner:



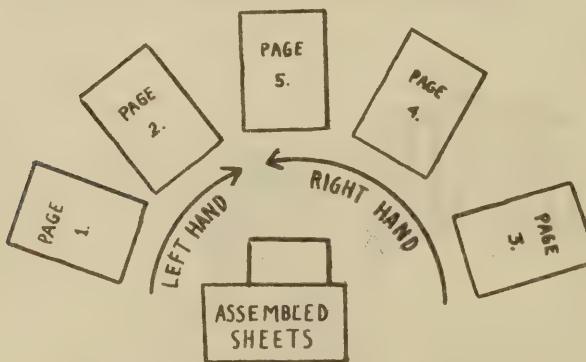
(2) Place a pack of each sheet of the circular against the sloping part of the cardboard:



(3) With rubber fingers on your right thumb and middle finger you pick up the sheets easily. Do this with one motion by sliding them toward each other. With another motion, slide them into the envelope which your left hand is holding open. Seal as shown in the first example.

#### Assembling a Pamphlet

The semicircle arrangement pictured below will save time and motion. Both hands are picking up pages; the left hand picks up one and two and the right hand picks up three, four, and five. The movement is from the outside to the center of the workplace. The assembled sheets are "jogged" together and placed directly in front of you.

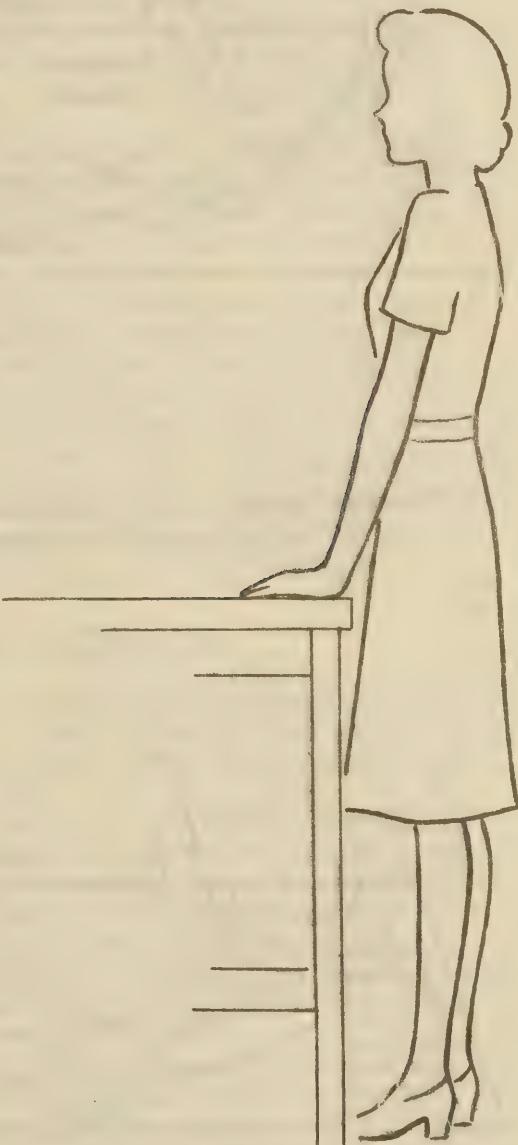


### Comfortable Working Height

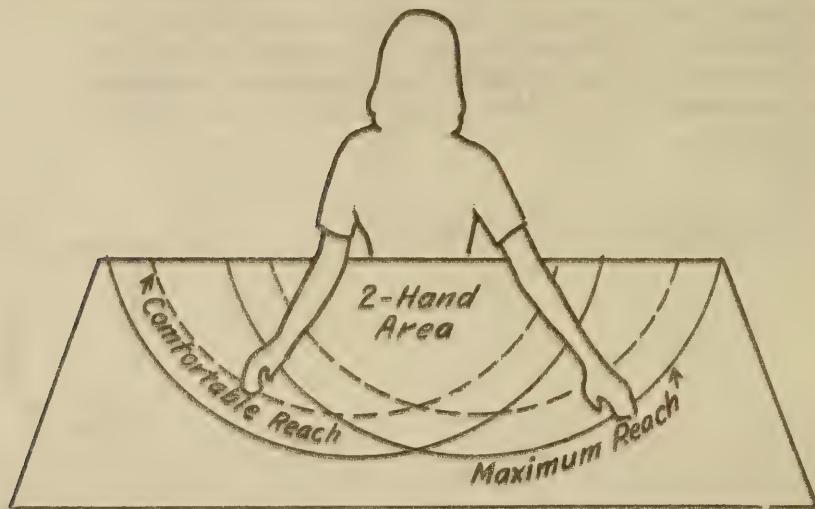
When doing routine work such as assembling, folding, stuffing, etc., you may wish to raise your work table to the height most comfortable for you. Generally, this is the height where the palms of the hands rest firmly on the table top when you are standing up straight. If assembly work of several hours' duration occurs frequently, use a stool or chair with extended legs to bring the body to the same height that it would be in a standing position.

### Workplace Layout

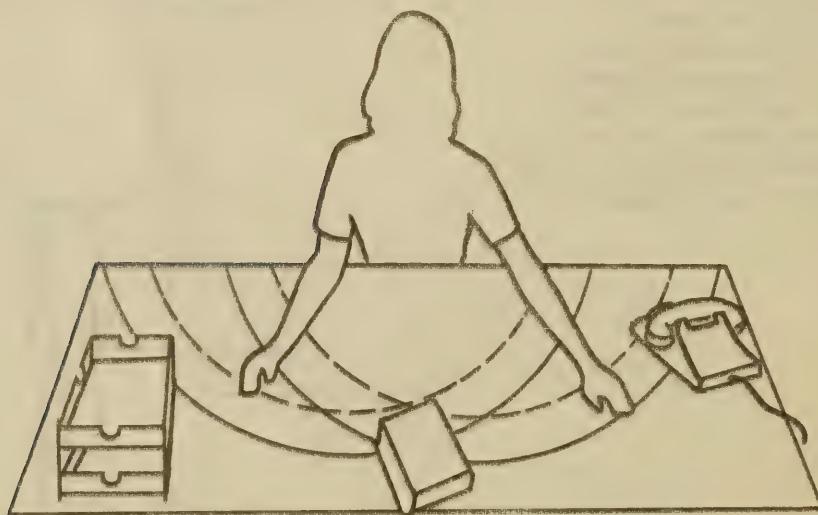
Hand travel on a desk in stretching and reaching for things is just as wasteful as unnecessary automobile travel in the field. By a little forethought it is easy for us to arrange our desks and work to save time and energy. A halfsecond saved in reaching for something seems like a small amount, but that halfsecond multiplied a thousand times a day for 1 year amounts to about 41 hours saved. Some suggestions for cutting down hand travel at a desk are:



- (1) Remove everything from the desk.
- (2) Use chalk to draw lines similar to the illustration to find your normal and extended working area and the best location for two-hand work.



- (3) Place telephone, file boxes and baskets, and materials to be worked on within these lines.



## MIMEOGRAPHING

### How to Type on Mimeograph Stencil Sheets

(1) Prepare the typewriter by shifting the ribbon out of printing position. Clean the type thoroughly with a wire-bristle brush. (If cleaning fluid is used, allow it to dry thoroughly so that it will not injure the stencil sheet.) Repeat this cleaning occasionally during the typing of the stencil.

(2) Plan your copy according to specific directions included in each box of stencil sheets. Keep copy within the dotted white limitation lines.

(3) Insert a cushion sheet smoothly between the stencil sheet and backing. Hold the combined sheets together at the bottom, and insert them into the typewriter with the backing sheet next to the platen. Avoid wrinkling. Straighten the stencil sheet in the typewriter.

(4) Type slowly, using a staccato touch. Strike with a little greater force those characters having a large printing surface, such as "M," "W," and "#," and with less force those having a smaller printing surface, as "c," "o," and the punctuation marks.

(5) Make corrections carefully. Correct each character separately, even if there are several successive errors. (a) Rub each letter gently with the round end of the burnisher (or a paper clip), using a circular motion. (b) Apply a thin but complete coating of correction fluid over each error with a single vertical stroke of the brush. Let fluid dry thoroughly. (c) Use a normal or a slightly lighter touch in retyping the correction.

(6) Remove cushion sheet as soon as stencil is typed.

(7) Proofread the stencil to detect errors.

### Illustrations and Lettering

With the help of an illuminated drawing board (mimeloscope) it is easy to reproduce line drawings, hand lettering, and ruled forms, especially when lettering guides, styli, and screen plates are used.

(1) Make a complete dummy which can be traced. If typing and illustrations are used on the stencil, do the typing first. In tracing the illustrations or lettering, cover the typed portion with a sheet of paper to keep it from being injured.

(2) Place the dummy drawing between the glass of the mimeloscope and the flexible writing plate, making sure that it is in the correct position. Fasten it to the glass of the mimeoscope with scotch tape.

(3) Fold the backing of the stencil sheet and insert it through the slot near the top of the glass plate. Hook the stencil stub over the four "buttons." Carefully draw the stencil sheet down smoothly over the writing plate and fasten it in place with the clamps.

(4) Trace the outlines of your illustration with the wire-loop stylus. The lines should be just as clean as your typing. Various styli are available for making lines that are broad or thick, solid or broken.

(5) Line drawings can be made much more effective by shading parts of them with screen plates. Each screen plate has a raised pattern. Place the screen directly under the stencil on the mimeoscope (the T-square can be used to hold it in place) and burnish over stencil with a screen surfacing stylus.

(6) Anyone can produce professional-looking hand lettering by using lettering guides. Simply follow the openings in the guide with the stylus designed for this work, but be certain to plan your lettering first so that the spacing looks even.

(7) Correct any errors by burnishing the error with a circular motion, but raise the stencil from the writing plate before applying correction fluid. Allow to dry, replace on plate, and make correction.

(8) Proofread the stencil to detect errors.

(9) When signing stencils, place a piece of cellophane over the stencil and then write with a stylus on the cellophane; this will make a clear signature and prevent tearing the stencil.

#### Running Copies

(1) Remove the cylinder cover, unlock the cylinder, and remove the protective cover.

(2) The ink pad will last longer if it is agitated regularly. Always agitate the pad before you start using the duplicator for the day. This is done by lifting the pad (by the bottom end) away from the cylinder several times and then reattaching it. This loosens the fibers and secures even distribution of the ink.

(3) Place the stencil on the cylinder with the "buttonholes" over the four hooks at the top. Place the stencil over the cylinder, smoothing the edges with your hand, and lock the end of the stencil under the stencil end clamp. If using a short stencil, place a piece of paper over the lower end of the cylinder and allow the stencil to overlap 1 inch.

(4) Riffle the impression paper and place it in position on the feed table.

(5) Feed the impression paper (either by hand or electrically, depending on the model duplicator you have). For certain kinds of work, slip-sheeting is advisable. This is done by placing a piece of strawboard or scrap paper by hand between the copies as they are stacked in the receiving tray. Some machines do this automatically.

(6) Remove the copies carefully. Let them dry for a few minutes before jogging them into position.

(7) Remove the stencil from the cylinder and clean it by placing it between newspaper and gently rubbing to absorb ink. Place a sheet of the material that has been mimeographed on each side of the stencil and fold twice. The stencil can then be easily identified by its mimeographed copy. File by date.

(8) Place a protective cover on the cylinder; lock it at "Stop here" position; release the crank and cover the machine.

### Care of the Mimeograph Machine

Keep the duplicating machine free of dust, dirt, and grime. Use soft cloths and cleansing benzine, or kerosene. One caution: keep all cleansing fluids away from the rubber parts of the duplicator, otherwise these parts may become swollen.

Take care of the rubber parts of the machine. They're hard to replace. Watch the impression roller. Keep it free from ink. Exercise special care to keep lint from accumulating on the rubber parts of the machine. Wash them with soap and water.

The oil line is the life line of your duplicator. Keep it properly lubricated. Oil all bearings and other places where friction occurs, with a good medium-weight oil.

Ink-pads on the duplicator last longer if they are agitated at the beginning of the day before work starts. Don't forget to change the ink-pad every 30 days, or oftener if the machine is used continuously.

The "counter" or recorder on a number of models of the duplicator can be set to run off the paper-feed automatically at the end of a run. Cut down on overruns. Produce only the exact number of copies you need. Run only one test copy for positioning. Make the second copy through the machine a perfect copy and the start of your run. All these points help to save paper — ink, too.

Handle the duplicator with care. Make mechanical adjustments carefully, not roughly. If your duplicator has an electric motor drive, change the speed of the electric motor only when it is running.

"Gang up" the work when it's practicable, running all 3 by 5 cards at one time, letter-size and legal-size materials at other times. This saves time in making adjustments.

Cover the machine when it is not in use, and be sure it has been "put to bed" when you leave the office at night.

If your office is left unheated at night to conserve fuel, be sure that all office appliances are warmed to daytime room temperature before starting the day's work on them. Use office appliances only after the room reaches a 65° temperature, or other recommended temperatures, and you should have no trouble.

### Distribution

Some States have a mimeographed page for secretaries, called "Instructions for Distribution," which has proved to be very useful. The instruction sheet has a place to record the date requested, the number of copies needed, the color of paper, whether to be mailed with postage or franked, and by whom requested. Then follows a list of possible persons to whom the letter might go with a space opposite each title or name for the agent to check the one intended.

The person writing the letter checks one of these sheets and gives it to the secretary at the time the letter is dictated. The instruction sheet is filed together with a copy of the run.

## OUR SKILL AS TYPISTS

We all like to do our work with the least amount of energy or exertion necessary. Let's see what a champion typist has found necessary to make her work easier.

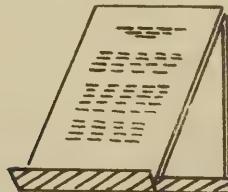
### Organized Workplace

Many of us may know the details of our own jobs, know the parts of our typewriter, know how to set up good-looking letters, know how to set up tables, know how to throw the carriage properly — but seldom do we consider combining all these skills into a combination of operations and learning to improve each one in sequence so that the entire operation will be easy to do.

Let's analyze our job as a typist to see what enters into the entire job, and that it is adjusted to us individually. First, there's the placement or arrangement of our supplies and equipment — copyholder, stencils, correction fluid, erasers, eraser shield, pencils, dictionary, etc. Are these supplies handy — within easy reach? Is our equipment properly adjusted to fit us so that we can work comfortably and easily?

Let's check the position of material we are copying. Can it be read easily with the minimum of eyestrain? It's much easier to read material when it is raised to a slant than when it is flat on our desk. Most offices are provided with copyholders. If we have none, placing a book or some object under the copy will raise it to a slanting position.

If possible, we will place it on the side of the typewriter opposite from the carriage lever. In this way, we will not break our line of vision each time we return the typewriter carriage. Wooden copyholders, such as this one, are helpful and can be made easily by someone who is handy with a saw and a planer.



Where do we keep our paper and carbon? Can we leave our desk drawer open so it's always within easy reach of our hands as we make up a carbon pack? Do we keep a small supply of stencils in our desk, so we don't need to walk over to that corner cabinet each time we must type a stencil? Is the correction fluid in our desk next to the stencils? Are erasers, pencils, and eraser shields in a handy tray in our desk? Where is the dictionary found when there's a word to look up? Can we pick it up without standing up and stretching across the desk?

If the desk does not have sufficient drawer space for holding supplies of stationery and carbons, a paper-supply box with compartments for holding the different kinds of paper may be placed on the corner of the desk.

Now that we've got our desk properly arranged, let's eliminate unnecessary movements by lifting our carbon pack and carrying it to our machine with one movement. Tap it just once to even the paper, and drop it between the platen and paper table. Isn't that easy? Actually, we've picked up the pack of paper, carried it to the machine, dropped it into the paper table, given the platen knob one spin, and come right down to position on the keys with one circular motion. A skilled typist makes this one operation instead of several. Cutting our movements to those involving the least motion can be applied to all our jobs.

#### Care of our Typewriter

The care we give our typewriter to keep it in good operating condition will determine the ease with which we work. Only if the type is kept clean and the ribbon checked frequently will it produce good-looking work. If it is treated as a tool for making our work easier, we will find the results satisfying. Here are a few suggestions for its protection, besides the "Daily and Weekly Do's" included in Easier Typing.

- (1) Keep the typewriter out of the sun. Sun eventually melts and destroys rubber parts.
- (2) If it has been in a cold room all night, wait until the room temperature has gone up to 65° before using it. The oil becomes stiff and it's harder to operate when cold.
- (3) Center the carriage each time before closing the typewriter into your desk. We want to keep it from getting banged or bent.
- (4) Let's not rest our arms or head over the typewriter; hairpins are often the cause of damage.
- (5) When an erasure is necessary, push the carriage to either side so the erasings will fall free of the machine and its parts.
- (6) Before calling a repairman, check to see that every part of the typewriter is in its proper operating position. Collided margin stops can lock a typewriter, so can a ribbon that is threaded incorrectly.
- (7) But call a repairman to fix some trouble before it becomes worse. "A stitch in time saves nine."

### Both Accuracy and Speed in Typewriting

Experts believe that speed in typewriting is reached only by forgetting our fear of making errors. Most typists can type many years without raising their own speed. This is usually the result of slow, careful typing - going slowly enough so as not to make errors.

The drill sentences shown here can be used to build speed in typing. Each day, type one or two of the sentences over and over with no regard for errors. It will require a little "pushing" in order to speed up. Start with the shortest sentence and continue typing it over until you can type it perfectly several times. Each day, take one or two new sentences for practice. You will find that after a certain time of pushing yourself for speed -- don't pay any attention to the number of errors you make -- the speed you have attained will stay with you and the errors will decrease.

These sentences are a good way to limber up fingers at the beginning of the day, just as athletes find it helpful to stretch and jump up and down to limber themselves.

## SAMPLE SPEED SPURT DRILL

	<u>Words per minute for 10 seconds</u>
It is simple to write these small words.	48
What one is means more than what one has.	48
One must just learn to walk past failures.	50
It is well to think and to do as well as we can.	58
The surest way to break a bad habit is to drop it.	60
If you try but fail, try again and again until you win.	66
How can one hope to get a good mark if he does poor work?	68
This is what I want to do—to get rid of jerks in typing.	68
There is more to learning to type than moving the fingers.	70
You can do your work without fear if you know how to do it.	71
Wealth is made up of those things that are owned by people.	71
We are judged by how we look just as well as by how we act.	71
A thing worth having is worth the work one takes to get it.	71
It is right to have speed; but I must work for control, too.	72
The way in which we work and what we do make us what we are.	72
I must know by my own check when the work is right or wrong.	72
The first element of success is the determination to succeed.	73
It is in my attitude toward each day's work that I must excel.	74
No price is too dear to pay for perfection in any kind of work.	75
In small matters men show themselves as they really are—small.	75
Through your daily work, you can make your future what you will.	77
If you are slow but steady, you can win the race; keep on trying.	78
The man is worthless who does not stake everything on his honor.	78
Do what you can and do it as well as you can; that brings success.	79
Even if you get little pay for what you do, give your best efforts.	80
Just doing nothing will not get you anywhere; get busy at something.	81
The sum of wisdom is that time that is devoted to work is never lost.	83
I told them not to make so much work for you to do at this first show.	84
If there were no hard things to do, there would be no joy in our work.	84
It is what we think and what we do that makes us the men we want to be.	85
Rate yourself on the whole of your work and not on just one phase of it.	86
The world makes way for the man who says that he knows he can make good.	86
I must learn to see what I type—to see the meaning as well as the words.	87
If I want to get ahead in the world, I must do all the work as well as I can.	87

Another drill for building speed in typewriting is the alphabet drill:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Type this as fast as possible several times each morning before beginning your typing work and you will notice how it helps to limber up fingers. Try also the home row drill several times:

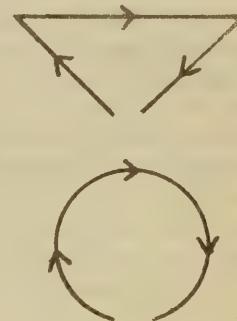
a;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;  
a;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;sldkfjghfjdksla;

asdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsaasdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsaasdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsasdfghjkl;  
asdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsaasdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsaasdfghjkl;lkjhgfdsasdfghjkl;

#### Setting up a Drill Plan

First of all, check your typing position before attempting any kind of drill work. For we can improve our typing technique only if we have the proper typing position. Are you sure your typewriter is high enough? Is your chair giving you the proper support for your back? Are you sitting close enough to your typewriter so that you need to use only finger motion?

Let's eliminate all unnecessary motion in the arms and shoulders. Check the way you throw the carriage. Does your arm make a triangular motion when returning the carriage, . . . . . or do you take advantage of the time the carriage is traveling by its own power, after you have given it a push, to bring your left hand down to the keyboard, to be ready to type the next word, using a continuous circular motion? . . . . .



Now that we have the correct typing position, we are ready to take a few drills in this order:

Home row drill  
Alphabet drill  
Speed spurt drills

This will take us about 5 minutes each morning, but we'll be all set for our work the rest of the day. Typing really should be fun!

Let's keep our strokes even; they should have rhythm. Don't put more energy than necessary into each stroke. Remember, a standard typewriter requires only about 1 pound of energy for each stroke; a noiseless, 4 to 7 ounces. Are you using more than you need? New typewriters are equipped on the side with a gadget to regulate touch — from light, through medium, to heavy.

## OUR SKILL IN WRITING AND TRANSCRIBING SHORTHAND

### Writing Shorthand

Skill in both writing and transcribing shorthand comes from constant practice and use. One good way to practice shorthand while not actually writing it is to think in terms of shorthand outlines. That sounds hard, doesn't it? But with just a little concentration on it at first, you will soon be doing it unconsciously. For instance, as you're reading this sentence, try to picture these words as you would write them in shorthand. Actually picturing shorthand outlines in your mind will make you so familiar with them, that when you begin writing, they will come with no effort.

Of course, there are a few pointers which will help to make the writing of shorthand easier:

(1) Allow yourself plenty of room for elbow spread when writing shorthand. You will be able to make much better outlines and, as a result, you will have better success in transcribing.

(2) If possible, use a pen for writing. It is much more permanent than pencil if notes must be saved for future reference.

(3) Check yourself to see that you're not pinching your pen or pencil -- you are if your hand or arm gets tense or tired after writing just a short while. This slows you down so that you soon begin drawing outlines, rather than writing them freely.

(4) Phrase as much as possible and master brief forms. You can make your own abbreviations of words that you use often or that are peculiar to your work.

(5) Keep a notebook of words you have difficulty in writing; maybe it's the word you wrote in longhand. Find the correct shorthand outline in a shorthand dictionary and practice it for future use.

(6) To build speed, get someone to dictate to you, and force yourself to write faster than usual. If you write one more word every 3 seconds, you will have increased your speed 20 words a minute. You may get good practice by taking news broadcasts or speeches on the radio.

### Transcribing Shorthand

So many of us find that we can write shorthand at from 80 to 100 words a minute, but when we come to transcribing it, we slow down to about 15 words a minute. There may be several reasons for this: (1) We are not writing good outlines in the first place; (2) we let our notes get "cold" before transcribing them; (3) we don't write an outline the same way twice; or, (4) we just need practice in reading shorthand.

Practice in reading shorthand (plate) material will help us to remedy all four difficulties. Reading a lot of shorthand plate material causes shorthand outlines to be imprinted in our minds many times over so that when we write shorthand, we write as we picture the outlines. If an outline has created a distinct impression on our mind, we will write it only one way, and it will not get "cold."

If you feel your shorthand is slowing down, why not decide to read any available shorthand plate material you can find for about 15 minutes each day. Following is a sample of shorthand plate material. Check yourself with the key after reading it.

THE PLANTING COMES FIRST  
(From the "Friendly Adventurer"\*)

- E - n - a /	5 - h - g - 2
- 2 - x - o - o	6 - 1 - 3 - 1
6 - n - i - f -	7 - e - n - u - 8
9 - o - s - e -	9 - o - d - 1 - 3
1 - o - n - R - d -	8 - u - 2 - 3 - 3
1 - o - o - b - n -	7 - u - - o - 1 -
2 - o - o - ? - R -	9 - m - 2 - 0 - 1 -
3 - o - o - d - 6 - d -	7 - 1 - 3 - 1 - 9 -
4 - n - 2 - u - 3 - o -	8 - o - - o - 2 - 3 -
5 - o - o - e - x - u -	7 - 2 - 1 - u - u -
6 - o - y - 1 - o - 1 -	6 - p - 1 - 2 - u -
7 - o - o - d - 1 -	9 - o - b - u - c - 1 -

\*By Wilfred A. Peterson in house magazine of Birmingham & Prosser Co.,  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

KEY: When spring comes around each year, I find myself admiring my neighbors' tulips. Their yards are rainbows of color. I look at my dull, drab yard and wish that I too had tulips growing there. Of course, wishing doesn't help at all. My yard is bare of tulips because I failed to plant bulbs in the fall. Next spring, though, the story will be different. This fall we have taken the necessary step and planted the bulbs. We have done our part and God will work His miracle. Our lives are like a garden too. To have rich personalities we must plant noble thoughts in our minds. To achieve success, we must sow the seeds of hard work, concentration, study, perseverance. If we neglect our planting we should not complain if the flowers of success and beauty do not blossom in our lives. The fault is our own.

AIDS TO  
CORRECT TYPEWRITING POSITION AND TECHNIQUE

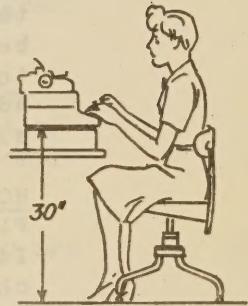
\* \* \* \*



WHAT IS THE CORRECT HEIGHT FOR MY TYPEWRITER?

Most typewriters are too low for comfortable working posture and effective control of the keyboard. The present height of 26 inches is not founded on any scientific basis but merely evolved from the sewing machine stand which supported the first typewriter whose carriage was thrown by a foot treadle.

Champion typists, for years, have typed on machines 30 inches from the floor. This enables the backs of the hands to conform comfortably with the slope of the keyboard and makes possible a clawing stroke, using the fingers only. This stroke is more accurate and speedy than the usual stroking position which involves motion of the entire arm.



HOW DOES 30" HEIGHT AFFECT TYPEWRITING SPEED?

High speed results from releasing keys quickly. Because the muscles on the inside of the hand are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times faster than those on the outside of the hand, the fastest stroking motions are made with those muscles which pull the fingers back off the keys (clawing stroke). The raised typewriter facilitates the use of gravity in that it places the hands higher, eliminating the upward motion required to get fingers off the keys. Raised position also encourages straight back and relaxed shoulders, both of which reduce stiffness and fatigue.



Faulty Technique

Most typists work too hard at typewriting. Tests show that they use 14 to 17 POUNDS of energy on each stroke whereas only 13 to 17 OUNCES of energy are required to stroke each key. Noiseless typewriters require only 4 to 7 OUNCES per stroke. The raised typewriter allows a typist to take advantage of this minimum amount of energy necessary to operate the keys.



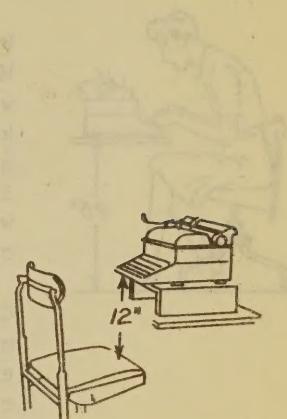
Clawing Stroke

### HOW DOES 30" HEIGHT AFFECT ACCURACY?

It allows the fingers to work closer to the keyboard, thus reducing the possibility of slipping off the key and striking the wrong one. A more effective control of the fingers can be maintained when stroking motion is chiefly in the fingers and hands.

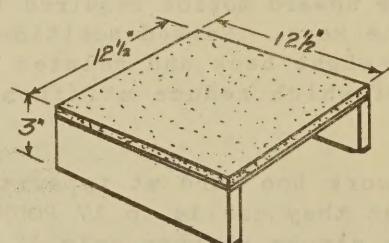
### SHOULD MY CHAIR BE ADJUSTED?

Typist's chair should be adjusted so that feet just rest firmly on the floor to give the body support and balance for the carriage throw. The difference between top of the chair seat and typewriter base should be about 12 inches. Move chair back-rest to fit small of the back. When properly adjusted, arms should almost parallel the slant of the keyboard.



### HOW CAN I MAKE MY TYPEWRITER THE CORRECT HEIGHT?

Place the box illustrated under typewriter. It comes in three sizes to give you a choice of working heights - 2 inches, 3 inches (average), and 4 inches, and in colors matching desk equipment (green, oak, walnut, mahogany, etc.). Rubber stair treads are fastened to the bottom edges of the box to prevent it from sliding. The top surface is made of soundproofing material (homasote) to reduce noise. Bureaus may order typewriter boxes from the Public Buildings Administration, Carpenter Shop. Cost - about \$1.00 each.



SELF-ANALYSIS SHEET  
(For checking my effectiveness as a county Extension secretary)

How much do I know about the Extension Service and its objectives—how it differs from Agricultural Adjustment Agency, Soil Conservation Service, Farm Security Administration, Farm Credit Administration, and other agricultural agencies?

Of what routine office details can I relieve the agents?

What is my part in keeping the services of the office available during regular office hours or when the agents are absent?

How do I show my interest and desire to help callers?

What method do I use to remember callers' names so I can greet them when they repeat office calls?

What do I do to keep the office looking neat and attractive, a fit place of business where the United States Department of Agriculture, the State agricultural college, and farm people meet?

How do I keep a schedule of where the agents are when they are in the field?

What method do I use for reminding myself of things which are to be done?

What work can I do ahead of schedule?

What rearrangement of the office can be made to make work simpler and easier?

How do I handle correspondence? Is this method effective? Do I have the necessary materials ready when called for dictation? Are my letters neat and well set up? Do they compare favorably with those received from the college?

How do I utilize my time in order to improve my office skills?

Do I identify the office upon answering the telephone?

How can my filing system be improved?

What can I do to make the writing of reports easier for the agents?

What are some of the ways to make my typing easier? Do I give my typewriter the proper care? How can I improve my speed and accuracy in typing? In shorthand?

Am I an efficient office manager?

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